

Rainy days welcome, but no break for aviators

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert
1st ACB Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq - When it rains, the work pours in for the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Air

Cavalry Brigade.

Bad weather may ground the brigade's flights around Baghdad, but the work pace doesn't skip a beat as pilots, crews and mechanics catch up

on training and maintenance that is vital to the endurance of the aircraft and, thus, the success of the missions.

The Department of the Army requirement is that 80

percent of the brigade's aircraft are fully-mission capable at any given time, said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Donald Washabaugh, a brigade aviation maintenance officer.

"We measure readiness of the aircraft in terms of hours, not days," said Washabaugh, a native of Collingswood, N.J. "When we have a break in flying (due to weather), we grab hold of that opportunity to work on inspections and maintenance; that increases readiness."

"When there is a weather day, and the aircraft all come down, it gives us a chance to focus on the fleet," said Priest River, Idaho, native Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Kingery, non-commissioned officer in charge of the brigade's aviation maintenance office. "We're busier when it rains. The Soldiers are a little more miserable because they're working in standing water, but they are getting nec-



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Sgt. Konata Springer, (left), and Spc. J. Allen perform maintenance on an AH-64D Apache Jan. 13 at Camp Taji, Iraq. Maintenance crews and pilots take advantage of rainy days to catch up on maintenance and to conduct refresher training.

See Rain Page 2

Healing touch is something understood in any language, culture

By Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Favreau
3-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BALAD, Iraq -- Iraqi citizens and coalition forces may speak different languages but they care for people all the same.

Dr. Riyadh Sabri, an Iraqi doctor, and Maj. Paul Fleenor, along with other medics from 3-8 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, set up a medical care operation,

known as a Cooperative Medical Engagement, for the people of the Al Audey Village inside the Rawashid district of the Diyala province in late December.

The mission was for Iraqi Army Soldiers along with coalition forces to screen the villagers by checking their vital signs and asking for health problems for Sabri to take a look at.

Sabri, the primary care giver for the operation, was assisted with medications and supplies provided by Soldiers from 3-

8 CAB. It was because of the joint effort that they were able to screen and treat over 125 local villagers.

At first the local population came in slowly but after a few moments word had gotten out that the Iraq Army and coalition forces were here to help, said Staff Sgt. Ruben Garcia, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3-8 CAB. People

See Healing, Page 3

Rainy days don't stop Air Cav troops from pushing on

Rain

From Page 1

essary work done to the aircraft."

Because of operational tempo that requires many hours in the air, the aircraft may develop small problems that don't necessarily decrease effectiveness, but can develop into larger problems.

However, since the crews are in the air as much as the aircraft, they can get to the

problems that could ground an aircraft for major repairs, but can't really get to those smaller repairs.

"The crews are responsible for maintenance, and if they're always engaged in flights, then they don't have time for their maintenance," Kingery said. "When they can't fly because of weather, they can get to the maintenance issues that have been building up. It's maybe not the same as when they are up in the air; it's less stress-

ful, but they still get a sense of accomplishment, because they are getting vital work done."

Washabaugh gives all the credit to those maintenance crews.

"Those kids are the backbone of aviation," Washabaugh said. "If they don't function, then none of this works. They are the ones providing combat power; they make sure this brigade flies. We try to convey that to them - how they fit in and how important they are. The fact that they have more time when the aircraft aren't flying to focus on maintenance really prevents this from being a big problem later on."

Although the pilots are still working when aircraft are grounded by weather, that work lacks the stress of a combat mission and helps to alleviate fatigue.

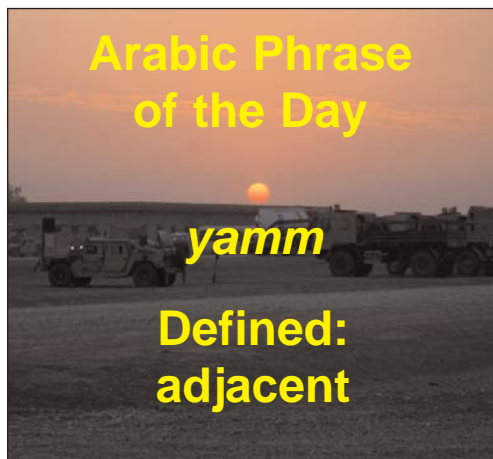
"[A down day] doesn't reset the pilots, but it takes the fatigue level out of the overall equation. It is a day with no cockpit stress," Washabaugh said.




There may be no whir of propellers in the skies when the weather is bad, but - on the ground at Camp Taji - the airfield and the pilots' crew areas are bustling with activity as crews and pilots maintain their readiness and their aircraft and prepare for the moment the clouds break.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Pfc. Marcus Pixler, (left), and Pfc. Daryl Ferguson, work on a CH-47D Chinook engine at Jan. 13 at Camp Taji, Iraq. Pixler and Ferguson are both from the 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st ACB.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Wednesday
High: 56 Low: 37	High: 54 Low: 39	High: 55 Low: 37	

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.
Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl
Command Information Supervisor: Master Sgt. Dave Larsen
NCOIC, Print Production: Staff Sgt. Mary Rose
Editor: Sgt. Michael Garrett
Staff Writers: Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, Pfc. Ben Gable, Spc. Shea Butler, Pfc. William Hatton
Contributing Writers: Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, Sgt. 1st Class Jamie

Favreau, Spc. Shea Butler
Contact the Daily Charge at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil.

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(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Favreau, 3-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Maj. Paul Fleenor, head surgeon for 3-8 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, checks the vision of a small Iraqi boy during the IA's and 3-8's Cooperative Medical Engagement in the Al Audey Village inside the Rawashid district of the Diyala province.

Cav medics assess village health needs

Healing

From Page 1

started coming in more and more, and soon it was more than the medics had anticipated, he said.

"It was hard to keep count of everyone we treated," added Garcia. "So we just kept going until supplies went out."

To Garcia, it was a chance to show the Iraqi people that he and his fellow Soldiers care about the local's health and they could trust the Soldiers, he said.

The majority of the patients Sabri came across only had minor injuries or sickness, except for one - a small boy with an infected cut on his hand.

The boy, who had obtained the cut weeks ago, had not received any medical treatment for his wound. The cut was so

infected that the infection was running up to his wrist. If the boy went untreated for as little as one more day, the chances of him losing his finger would have been greatly increased.

The medics worked quickly to help the young boy and treat his wound.

If he keeps the wound clean and keeps taking his antibiotics, he will be fine, said Garcia.

Though Fleenor, head surgeon for 3-8 CAB, and his medics had their hands full with screening patients, they knew this operation was more about supporting the Iraqi doctor and giving the people in the village confidence in the ability of their local doctor to take care of them.

"It's good to start working with the local doctors," said Fleenor. "The people of Al Audey were very thankful."

Baghdad in Brief

10 suspects, high-value target detained in east Baghdad

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq - Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops captured 10 suspected insurgents, including a high-value target during an operation in eastern Baghdad Jan. 14.

Soldiers with the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team made the capture as part of Operation Howard. Besides capturing the suspected insurgents, the Soldiers recovered two grenades, multiple vests and AK-47s with magazines.

The operation was part of an effort to help Iraqis establish security in eastern Baghdad. The ten suspects detained are in military custody for further questioning.

Troops detain seven suspects, confiscate weapons

BAGHDAD - Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops detained seven suspected insurgents and seized weapons and ammunition during clearing operations in a southern neighborhood of the Iraqi capital Jan. 14.

Elements of the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division is conducting Operation Arrowhead Strike IV, aiming to disrupt insurgent activities and deny urban support zones to terrorists in the Al-Doura district of Baghdad.

Troops detained seven suspects, while discovering three AK-47s, 14 magazines of ammunition and one radio base station.



Mountain Warriors feed people of Al-Furat

By Spc. Shea Butler
7th MPAD

AL-FURAT, Iraq - It was a common meeting between a coalition commander and an Imam. A normal conversation commenced between them. After discussing pressing issues the meeting ended with a handshake and a firm promise to help local residents.

"We didn't have much time to prepare but we got the job done, and we made a promise," said 1st Lt. Robert Andersen, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade, Kentucky Army National Guard.

Within 48 hours of that promise, Soldiers from 1-149th "Mountain Warriors" quickly responded to the needs of the people of Al-Furat. They deliv-

ered enough food Jan. 7 for 300 people to live off of for a week.

"It was a quick mission. It only lasted 15 to 20 minutes," said Andersen.

"We were able to deliver all kinds of food products and blankets," Andersen added.

Security was in place in and around the neighborhood which allowed the Soldiers to move around freely and complete the mission.

Al-Furat is a Sunni neighborhood surrounded by Shiites. They needed a little help and coalition forces were willing to do so, said Maj. Chris Cline, a Hodgenville, Ky., native serving with the 1-149th.

"Security was a big part of the mission too," said Anderson, an Elizabethtown, Ky., native. "Without the secu-



(Photo by Maj. Chris Cline, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade)

Sgt. 1st Class Todd Hensley, unloads a truck full of food for the local residents of Al-Furat, Iraq Jan. 7.

rity the mission would have been more difficult.

"The locals were very thankful and willing to help unload the food," Cline said. "They were cooperative."

The Mountain Warriors didn't have much time to prepare for the mission because

the people were in need, but it was completed without any complications, Andersen said.

"I credit the success of the mission to the fact that we are National Guard (Soldiers)," Cline said. "We are used to doing humanitarian missions in the states, as well."



(Photo by Sgt. Cheryl Cox, 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Searching and sniffing

Petty Officer 2nd Class Sasha Martinez (left), a Navy dog handler, and her dog, 'Goof,' assist Staff Sgt. Adam Armstrong, the personal security detachment non-commissioned officer in-charge for 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, clear an underground living area inside a walled compound in Rashidiyah, Iraq during a cordon and search mission conducted Jan. 11.

S.C. Guard unit earns the "horse"

By Spc. Shea Butler
7th MPAD

CAMPLIBERTY, Iraq - The unit crest of the 151st Field Artillery Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard features a horseshoe symbolizing their historical background as a horse-drawn field artillery unit.

They keep with the same theme as they donned the symbol of their combat service - the 1st Cavalry Division's large horse head combat patch.

With nearly three months since arriving in Iraq, troops from the 151st were awarded their combat patch for supporting Multi-National Division - Baghdad Jan. 11.

The unit plays a vital role within MND-B - they track locations and issues concerning the Iraqi security forces.

Though some members of the brigade have different roles in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the majority of the unit's members can be found working in the Iraqi security force cell in the division headquarters.

It's here they run 24-hour operations to act as the liaison for the ISF, and fly their Sumter, S.C. flag with pride.

"We have Soldiers working anywhere from 12 to 18 hour shifts," said Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Dorner, the senior enlisted member in the brigade. "We keep track of all the Iraqi Army and Iraqi national police in MND-B. We collect and distribute battlefield information between the ISF and



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th MPAD)

1st Lt. Mason Young, with 151st Field Artillery Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard, receives his combat patch Jan. 11 from Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr., Multi-National Division- Baghdad commanding general.

us."

It is important to know where everyone is on the battlefield, Dorner said, so no one is crossing sectors.

"We provide the layout of the battlefield," he explained.

Not only do they track where the ISF are working and patrolling, but they also keep up with the issues concerning the ISF.

"We work their logistical problems, as well," Dorner said. "We help with their pay issues and living arrangements."

"We have an interpreter assigned to us and the ISF usually has one too, so that

makes things easier," Dorner said.

Everyone plays an important role in making this operation go smoothly, Dorner said.

No matter what job a Soldier performs here, Dorner said there is one thing they all have in common - they all receive a patch for being here.

There are many different patches, but the command sergeant major said they all mean the same thing.

"It (the patch) reinforces that we are all one Army wanting to accomplish the same thing," Dorner said. "The patch really cements you to a unit."

TELEVISION



	8:00p.m.	8:30p.m.	9:00p.m.	9:30p.m.	10:00p.m.	10:30p.m.	11:00p.m.
AFN sports	NBA - Phoenix Suns at Memphis Grizzlies					NBA - Miami Heat at Los Angeles Lakers	
AFN prime ATLANTIC	Headline News	ATS/Regional News	Heroes		Sesame Street Specials	Supernatural	
AFN news	MSNBC Live		MSNBC Live		Fox News Live		Studio B